

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2003

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, UR, US

SUBJ: JUST AND UNJUST NUCLEAR WAR

REF: USDAO MOSCOW 0206

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DISCUSSION OF JUST AND UNJUST WARS, INCLUDING NUCLEAR, IN RED STAR ARTICLE FEB 7 SEEMS PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO KEEP IDEOLOGICAL SOCKS UP IN RESPONSE TO WESTERN THEORETICAL ATTACKS ON THIS HALLOWED MARXIST-LENINIST CONCEPT IN NUCLEAR EAR. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, ARTICLE SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS EFFORT TO MODIFY SOVIET STRATEGIC DOCTRINE OR TO BACK AWAY FROM U.S.-SOVIET PNW AGREEMENT'S PREAMBULAR STATEMENT THAT "NUCLEAR WAR WOULD HAVE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES FOR MANKIND." END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES RED STAR ARTICLE BY V. SHELYAG SHOULD
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BE READ MORE AS IDEOLOGICAL-PROPAGANDA EFFORT (ITS SUBTITLE

IS "ON THE IDEOLOGICAL BATTLEFRONTS") THAN AS SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIC DOCTRINE. (SEE REFTTEL FOR CONTRARY VIEW). EVEN IF TAKEN AS REFLECTION OF EXISTING SOVIET STRATEGIC DOCTRINE, IT IS STRETCHING A POINT TO READ INTO IT A REJECTION OF THE CONCEPT SET FORTH IN THE 1961 PARTY PROGRAM THAT A WORLD NUCLEAR WAR COULD "ANNIHILATE WHOLE NATIONS." THE AUTHOR'S QUOTING ANOTHER PASSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM CONFIRMS ITS CONTINUED VALIDITY AS POLITICAL DOCTRINE. IT IS TRUE THAT THE PORTION QUOTED BY THE AUTHOR REITERATES THE VAGUE THREAT THAT IF IMPERIALISM STARTS SUCH A WAR IT WILL BE BURIED BY "THE PEOPLES" OF THE WORLD. BUT NEITHER THIS MEANINGLESS THREAT, NOR THE WARNING THAT ALL OF THE SOVIET UNION'S NIKES WOULD FALL ON THE INITIATOR OF A NUCLEAR ATTACK AGAINST THE USSR, CAN BE READ AS CLAIMING THAT THE USSR WOULD NOT TAKE EQUALLY DISASTROUS PUNISHMENT. THE MOST ONE CAN SAY ABOUT BOTH ASSERTIONS IS THAT THEY ARE AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW THAT SOCIALISM WILL PREVAIL NO MATTER WHAT. THUS SHELYAG IS MERELY CONTINUING TO PUSSYFOOT AROUND THE CONCEPT OF MUTUAL ASSURED DESTRUCTION.

3. REFTTEL'S ANALYSIS OF SHELYAG ARTICLE, IF ACCURATE, WOULD INDICATE THAT HE IS CONTRADICTING THE PREAMBULAR STATEMENT IN THE U.S.-SOVIET PNW AGREEMENT OF JUNE 1973 THAT "NUCLEAR WAR WOULD HAVE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES FOR MANKIND." YET PRAVDA TOOK A DIFFERENT LINE JUST THREE DAYS EARLIER WHEN IT SEVERELY CRITICIZED U.S. PROPOSALS (ATTRIBUTED TO GENERAL GOODPASTER) FOR LOW-YIELD WARHEADS DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, ALLEGING THAT SUCH PROPOSALS WERE A U.S. EFFORT TO CIRCUMVENT THE LETTER OF PNW AGREEMENT.

4. IT IS THEREFORE USEFUL TO LOOK CLOSELY AT WHAT SHELYAG SAYS ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF WORLD NUCLEAR WAR: MARXIST-LENINISTS CONSIDER NUCLEAR WAR "THE GREATEST DISASTER FOR HUMANS (LYUDEI)"; BUT JUDGMENTS ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIZATION AND ASSERTIONS THAT THERE WOULD BE NO VICTORS IN A NUCLEAR WAR ARE BASED ON MATHEMATICAL CALCULATIONS AND ARE OVERSIMPLIFIED. THE SOVIET UNION HAS HALF THE WORLD'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND "IF THE IMPERIALISTS ATTACK US" THESE WEAPONS WOULD BE "THE MEANS OF DECISIVELY DEFEATING THE AGGRESSOR AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THE MEANS OF DEFENDING CIVILIZATION." WHAT SHELYAG SEEMS TO BE SAYING IS COMMONPLACE; NUCLEAR WAR WOULD BE

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A HUMAN DISASTER, BUT THE USSR WILL NOT ACCEDE TO POLITICAL DEMANDS OUT OF FEAR OF SUCH A DISASTER.

5. RECIPIENTS WHO DO NOT PLAN TO READ THE ARTICLE THEMSELVES SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT IT IS LARGELY DEVOTED TO DEALING WITH THE AWKWARD IDEOLOGICAL QUESTION OF HOW ONE CAN JUSTIFY DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN "JUST" AND "UNJUST" WARS IF YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT DEVASTATING NUCLEAR WARS. SHELYAG COMES UP WITH THE EASY

ANSWER THAT AN UNJUST WAR IS ONE STARTED BY THE IMPERIALISTS, AND A JUST WAR IS THE DEFENSIVE RESPONSE OF THE SOCIALIST SIDE TO THAT ATTACK. ONE CURIOUS ASPECT OF THE ARTICLE IS THAT IT GETS SO TANGLED UP IN THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM THAT IT MAKES NO GESTURES ON BEHALF OF WARS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AS "JUST" WARS.

6. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH AN AFFIRMATION THAT DETENTE IS THE MAIN TENDENCY AND THAT THE PARTY IS CERTAIN THAT THE "PEACE OFFENSIVE" WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. IT IS CONCEDED THAT LEADERS OF "IMPERIALIST POWERS" HAVE BECOME MORE REALISTIC, WHILE THE DANGER LIES MAINLY IN POSSIBILITY THAT "RATHER INFLUENTIAL" REACTIONARY FORCES MAY ASSERT THEMSELVES.
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